

2023 Montgomery County Public Schools
Blueprint Implementation Plan
Recommendation for Approval

Local Education Agency	Montgomery County Public Schools
Date of Approval	

The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) staff has completed its review of Montgomery County's Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan, including all revisions made in response to requests by the AIB and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). AIB staff has determined that the revised version of Montgomery's initial implementation plan meets the Criteria for Success and is recommending it to the Board for **approval. With the Board's approval of the plan, FY 2024 Blueprint funds automatically withheld pending AIB approval of the LEA's plan will be authorized for release by MSDE in accordance with the Blueprint law.**

Review Process

Each local education agency (LEA) was required to submit its Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan to the AIB and MSDE concurrently on March 15, 2023. Immediately following their submission, AIB staff reviewed them to determine if they met the minimum requirements established in the AIB's Initial Blueprint Comprehensive Plan, including responding to all questions in the template and staying within the 98 page maximum length (excluding the template). In April 2023, the AIB determined that all LEA plans met the minimum requirements and, in accordance with statute, FY 2023 Blueprint funds were authorized for release by MSDE.

MSDE and AIB staff then conducted separate evaluations of each of the 24 LEA plans to determine if they met the Criteria for Success. For AIB's review, AIB staff and consultants, as well as Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee staff, served as reviewers of both LEA implementation plans and Career Counseling MOUs. Each reviewer was assigned to read pillar-specific sections of individual LEA plans and some reviewers read and evaluated entire implementation plans. Ultimately, every section of each LEA plan was evaluated by two different reviewers for AIB who consolidated their feedback to inform their final decision of whether each criterion in the Criteria for Success was met.

MSDE's review process is described in the memo hyperlinked below. MSDE provided up to two rounds of feedback with requests for revisions to LEAs before sending their recommended plans for approval in two groups to the AIB between May 16 and June 6, 2023. AIB staff reviewed the LEA revised plans and, if applicable, identified additional responses requiring revisions based on one or more of the following criteria:

- The response did not adequately or entirely address the associated criterion in the Criteria for Success;
- The response did not adequately or entirely address a requirement for implementation identified in the Initial Blueprint Comprehensive Implementation Plan; or
- The response did not adequately or entirely address a statutory requirement.

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AIB staff requested revised responses from LEAs as applicable over two rounds of feedback provided between May 25 and June 20, 2023. AIB staff provided additional technical assistance including numerous office hour sessions to assist LEAs with their revisions. Each revised LEA response was re-evaluated against the appropriate criterion to determine if the revisions met the requirements. Once all revised responses were reviewed and determined to meet the requirements, the LEA's revised plan was ready to be recommended to the Board for approval.

In addition, AIB staff/ consultants and CTE Committee staff reviewed the Career Counseling MOUs that LEAs, local workforce development boards, and community colleges submitted with each LEA plan and subsequent versions. The review criteria included meeting the requirements in the Blueprint law and the guidance provided by AIB and MSDE. Staff provided feedback to each county and requested revisions to the MOUs as applicable on June 5, with rolling deadlines in June and July for submitting and re-submitting revised MOUs until they meet the requirements.

Plan Materials

Montgomery County's plan submitted to the Board for approval includes the materials listed below:

- [2023 Blueprint Implementation Plan](#)—the original plan submitted by the LEA in March 2023, including a draft Career Counseling MOU if available.
- [AIB Feedback](#)—the request(s) for revisions from AIB staff sent to the LEA and the LEA's revised response(s) based on this feedback.
- MSDE [Memo](#) and Feedback ([round one](#)) ([round two](#))—the request(s) for revision from MSDE staff sent to the LEA and the LEA's revised response(s) based on this feedback. (NOTE: Some LEAs received two rounds of feedback. In this case, the feedback round is noted in the document's title.)
- [Feedback on Career Counseling Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#)—feedback provided to LEAs on the initial and revised versions of the Career Counseling MOU.
- [Career Counseling MOU](#)—most recent version of the LEA's MOU.

Once the Board has approved LEA plans, LEAs will submit their final 2023 implementation plans to AIB that reflect the approved revisions they submitted to both MSDE and AIB. This final version will be posted on the AIB website, including a Spanish translation version when available. Final Career Counseling MOUs will also be posted on the AIB website.

AIB Feedback

During the review process, AIB reviewers identified numerous areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in each LEA plan. A summary of the highlights are provided below. Additional feedback will be provided to LEAs as part of ongoing technical assistance to support LEAs as they implement their 2023 plans and develop their five-year plans for submission in 2024.

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Areas of Strength and Opportunity	● Montgomery County's plan describes a comprehensive system for disseminating information about Pre-K enrollment to as many families of eligible children as possible. They also identify strategies for supporting families through the online enrollment process, including through the Child Find screening process. ● MCPS has a strong plan for literacy instruction and English Language Arts that includes a clear statement of the literacy skills all students must develop and apply, as well as a clear vision of the strategies and instructional practices necessary to equip students with those skills. ● MCPS has a thorough process for reviewing and selecting high quality instructional materials, relying on both externally vetted reviews (e.g, Ed Reports) and MCPS-specific rubrics and tools and broad participation in the process. ● MCPS is supporting students' behavioral health through a restorative justice approach by creating a Restorative Justice Coach position in all schools. As MCPS develops its career ladder, the coaching positions should be integrated into teacher leadership roles to ensure that great teachers remain in the classroom at least a portion of the day to support student learning and enhance their ability to support their peers. ● AIB and CTE Committee staff have reviewed and approved Montgomery County's career counseling MOU. The specific feedback provided to Montgomery throughout the review process is available through the MOU feedback form linked above.
Areas for Further Growth and Improvement	● Montgomery County notes that it will take five years to develop and implement a common preK registration platform. The LEA should consider how it can shorten this timeline to ensure that all families can access a centralized enrollment system as soon as possible. ● MCPS should build out its comprehensive math plan using the same standards applied to developing its comprehensive literacy plan to expand beyond a statement of values and desired outcomes and address the practical implications of ensuring that students are ready for college-level credit-bearing coursework upon graduation. ● MCPS does not describe plans and supports for students not meeting CCR goals beyond the description of the general planning process available to all students. The LEA should consider how it will modify the use of its existing Course Planner tool to individualize supports for students who are not meeting CCR by the end of 10th grade. In addition, staff training should not be limited to using the Naviance course planner, but for building out CCR plans overall. MCPS should also consider how it can meaningfully engage families in creating CCR support plans as opposed to informing them when they are being created.